Conversion of Madurai-Maniyachchl railway line into B. G.

1168. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Southern Railway have approached to Government to modify the Madurai-Maniyachchi railway line by going in for a parallel broad gauge line instead of converting the existing metre gauge into broad gauge line;

(b) whether Government have examined this proposal, if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) whether it is a fact that the work on a parallel line could be completed three years quicker than working on a gauge conversion and also at a lesser cost avoiding escalation?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA). (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal submitted by the railway was considered and it was observ ed that the parallel BG line would im pose an initial as well as recurrng un acceptable financial burden on the rail ways. Accordingly, it was decided that the conversion should be carried out in stead of having a parallel BG line on Madurat-Maniyachchi section.

(c) The progress on conversion would depend on the availability of resources for the work. Since the parallel BG line will cost more gauge conversion would be preferable.

Abolition of carrying of night soil

1169. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOP MENT be pleased to state:

(a) what steps have been taken to abolish carrying of night soil; and

(b) what incentives have been offered to the municipalities to abolish this heinous practice?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVE-LOPMENT (SHRI DAULAT RAM SARAN): (a) and (b) The Government of India has launched an integrated scheme of Low Cost Sanitation and Liberation of Scavengers for the elimination of manual scavenging to the maximum possible extent in the 8th Five Year Plan. Guidelines of the scheme have since been circulated to the State Governments/UTs for implementation in a time bound manner.

The Scheme seeks to adopt "whole town" approach and cover 500 towns with a population of less than 5 lakhs by replacing dry latrines or construction of low cost sanitation units where open defecation is resorted to. It also includes amendment of the Municipal by-laws wherever necessary to prevent further construction of dry latrines.

The scheme is being operated through the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) by providing a mix of subsidy from the Central Government and loans from HUDCO in a synchronised manner to the urban local bodies proposed by the State Governments and Union Territories as per the following financing pattern: —

EWS — 45 per cent subsidy, 50 per cent loan and 5 per cent beneficiary contribution.

LIG — 25 per cent subsidy, 60 per cent loan and 15 per cent beneficiary contribution.

MIG/HIG — Nil subsidy, 57 per cent loan and 25 per cent beneficiary contribution.

Government of India have, in this process, offered the entire financing package to the urban local bodies through the State Governments to totally eliminate manual scavenging of human wastes with minimal beneficiary contribution. It is upto the urban local bodies to utilise this package which involves no financial outgo on the part of the State Government and the urban local body.